



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development
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STEPTOE ANNOUNCES THE AVAILABILITY OF \$4.45 MILLION IN RURAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS TO FOSTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Morgantown, WV – March 23, 2006: Rural Development State Director Robert M. Steptoe, III, today announced the availability of \$4.45 million nationwide in economic development grants available to assist in cooperative development ventures through establishing and operating cooperative development centers as part of the ongoing effort by the Bush Administration to increase economic opportunities in rural areas.

“These centers for rural cooperative development offer our rural citizens the resources they need to support the expansion of economic opportunities within their community,” said Steptoe.

The cooperative development grant program is administered through USDA Rural Development. The grants will be awarded on a competitive basis and are intended to foster rural cooperative development through projects that provide rural residents with education and technical assistance in areas of business and cooperative startup, marketing, managing, and other self-help tools.

Grants may be made to nonprofit corporations and institutions of higher education. Grants may not be made to public bodies or for-profit entities.

The deadline for submitting a grant application is May 20, 2006. The maximum award per grant is \$225,000 and matching funds are required.

Further information on the rural cooperative development grant program and application requirements can be found in the Monday, March 20, 2006 Federal Register at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20061800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/E6-4006.htm>, on USDA Rural Development’s website at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rcdg/rcdg.htm> or by contacting John Comerci, Rural Business and Cooperative Programs Specialist, 481 Ragland Road, Beckley, WV 25801, telephone (304) 253-9597, extension 146, fax (304) 252-5809 or TTY/TDD (304) 284-4836.

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Further information on USDA Rural Development may be obtained by visiting USDA’s web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>. In West Virginia, call 1-800-295-8228 to be put in touch with the appropriate personnel serving your county. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA’s TARGET Center at 202.720.2600 (voice and TDD). ##

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